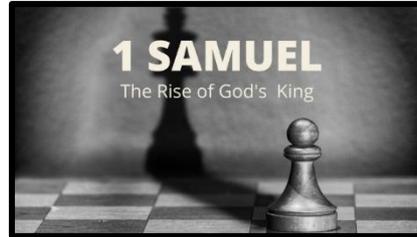


The Dawn of Hope

1 Samuel 1.1-2.10



INTRODUCTION

Well there are different periods throughout history. There are periods of calmness and stability, and these periods are interrupted by events or leaders that move one phase of history to the next. They are the periods that restructure society.

And when we look at the world around us. When we look at the West generally and Australia specifically, we can see that we might be in one of those phases. There's the fall of Christianity and the rise of secularism; the fall of the analogue age and the rise of the digital age; and the fall of the family and the rise of the self – just as some examples. And in these changes to the way things are, these changes are not so cleanly cut.

Overview. Now tonight we are beginning a new series. And over the next couple of months, we'll be going through the 1st and 2nd book of Samuel. And what we'll see is that during this period, Israel also experienced a significant juncture in its history. A change in the religious order – from the tabernacle of Moses in Shiloh to the dawn of a Temple in Zion. A change in political order – from the time of the judges to the time of the monarchy. A change in technological order – from the bronze age to the iron age. A change in economic order – from oppression and poverty to liberation and prosperity. And a change in social order – from 12 tribes to a unified nation.

Outline of I and II Samuel. And because we're at the start of the Book, I just wanted to give you a brief overview – just to get a sense of where we're going. And

the first thing you'll notice is that even though this series is titled on 1st Samuel, there are two books: there's 1st and 2nd Samuel and together they are cohesive unit telling a cohesive story.

The Books Samuel (I & II)		
1	Sam. 1 - 2	Prologue
	Sam. 2 - 12	The rule of Samuel
	Sam. 13 - 31	The rule of Saul
2	Sam. 1 - 20	The rule of David
	Sam. 21 - 24	Epilogue

And this is important because the Books are Bookended by a prologue and epilogue. In other words, there's something that the author of the Books has placed at the beginning and end of the story, and he's used this as a literary device to set out the main themes and message for the rest of the book.

Then when we move to the body of the book, we'll see that it traces the story of three people and their rule in Israel. And it's going to move from Samuel, through to Saul, through to David.

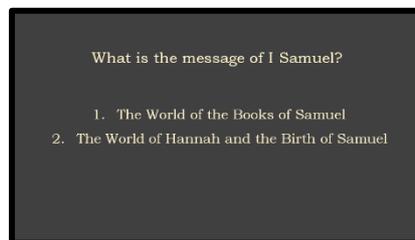
Outline of I Samuel. But this is just a simple layout to visualise the basic movement of the book. Because as I noted, the Books of Samuel are describing a juncture in history that takes us from the time of the judges to the monarchy. And ultimately from the monarchy that begins with Saul – to lead us to David. And in each of these reigns, there's drama that's going on and the 1st Book of Samuel captures the drama in the lives of Samuel and Saul.

I Samuel		
1	Sam. 1 - 2	Prologue
	Sam. 2 - 12	The rule of Samuel <i>The fall of the judges and the rise of the monarchy</i>
	Sam. 13 - 31	The rule of Saul <i>The fall of the people's desired king and the rise of God's desired king</i>
2	Sam. 1 - 20	The rule of David
	Sam. 21 - 24	Epilogue

And so to get a deeper sense of what's going on in 1st Samuel, we'll see two main movements. First, in Chapters 2-12 – The fall of the judges and the rise of the

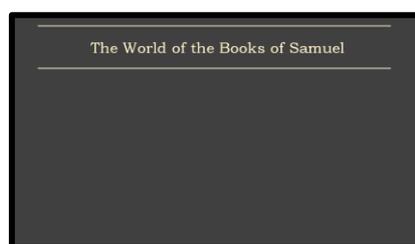
monarchy. Then, in Chapters 13-31 – The fall of the people’s desired king and the rise of God’s desired king.

Outline of Sermon. But of course, the wheels for this drama begin turning in our prologue. And this prologue describes the relationship of Hannah with the LORD and the events that lead to Samuel’s birth. And like I noted before, what we see in the prologue will form the main pattern and message that will unfold in the rest of Samuel. So the question that we as God’s people are called to ask when we open God’s Word in Samuel is this: what is the message of First Samuel? In other words, how does the birth of Samuel set up the rest of the book?



And to answer this question we’re going to break it up into two parts. First, we will enter the world of the Book of Samuel. Then, we’ll enter the world of Hannah and the birth of Samuel. In other words, we’re going to first set the context so we can then move to the text.

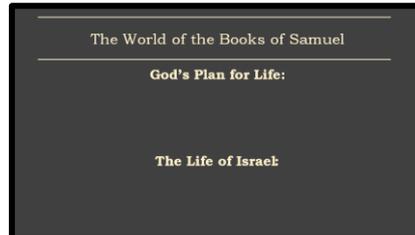
ENTERING THE WORLD OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL



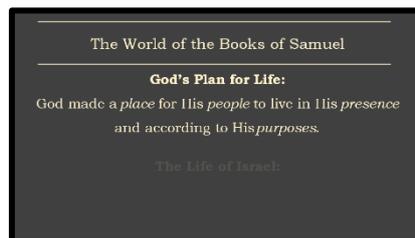
Now like I said, the Books of Samuel describe the movement of one stage of history to the next. It’s in this book that we’ll see the rise and fall of different social, political and religious orders. And it’s in this books that we’ll see the rise and fall of leaders. But this isn’t where we begin. Instead, we begin with a personal story in the hill country of Ephraim.

So why start here? Why not start with a battle scene, or espionage, or an affair?

Well just as these days you wouldn't just jump midway into a movie or a TV series without pausing to be caught up. Let me briefly hit pause to catch you up. And we need to do this with two contexts. First, we need to consider the big picture, or God's plan for life. And this is going to take us into our second context, which is the life of Israel at the time of Samuel.



God's Plan for Our Life. Now when God created man, He intended for us to live the beautiful life. In other words, *God made a place for a people to live in His presence and according to His purposes.* This was the beautiful plan for life and it sets the stage for everything else we see in Scripture.



And of course, we know that man rejected this life. He rejected to live according to God's purposes and so he was exiled from His presence. And yet before God exiles humanity from His presence He makes a promise. He makes a promise for a seed. And this seed will restore this plan. In other words, the seed was to come a renew a place for a people to live in God's presence and according to His purposes.

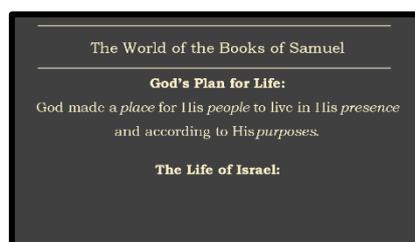
And the question we're left asking as history and Scripture unfold is 'Who is this seed?' and 'Will God be faithful to provide the seed?'. It is this promise that God makes that begins to unfold the rest of Scripture and the rest of the history of God's plan to rescue the world.

Redemptive History. Now the first important juncture is that God calls a man named Abraham and He promises to give him a land and a nation – or a place and a people. But before long, God’s people find themselves enslaved to Egypt.

And it is here that we begin to see God’s mighty acts of salvation. God first redeems a *people* for Himself, then He gives them a Law to live according to His *purposes*, which then leads to a the Tabernacle to come into His *presence*. And the story ends with Israel on the brink of entering into the *place* to live this beautiful life with God. In other words, what we see as Scripture unfolds is how God is faithfully guiding history to a renew a place for His people to live in His presence according to His purposes.

And this takes us into the book of Joshua. Joshua becomes the new leader and he leads Israel into the place that God promised Abraham. Yet at the death of Joshua, there’s a change in leadership structure. We see a transition from permanent leaders to temporary regional leaders. And these temporary leaders were called Judges.

The Life of Israel. And as we enter the time of the Judges, we now begin to see the immediate context of the life of Israel around the birth of Samuel. And to understand this, there are three things that are significant in Judges that we must note.



First, is the presence of *enemies*. Israel failed to destroy all the inhabitants who then had a corrupting effect. There’s a war from without – or a war against the other nations. But there’s also a war form within – or a civil war amongst the Israelites.

Second, these enemies could conquer because there was the *absence of Law*. Over the course of the book of Judges, there are two repeated refrains: ‘the people of

Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD' and 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes'. In other words, one refrain gives the perspective from heaven – from God's eyes. And the other refrain gives the perspective from earth – from man's eyes.

Now God could and would raise up a judge to give temporary peace from the war without, but there was no one to protect from the war within. And this leads us to the third thing – which is *there was no king*. The full sentence of the second refrain is written like this: 'In those days there was no king, everyone did what was right in their own eyes'. In other words, there was no one to govern them or lead them in the paths of righteousness. (In fact we read of a man from the hill country of Ephraim who used some of the money he stole back from the money that was stolen from his mother to turn it into an idol – and He did it to worship the God of Israel. He did what was right in his own eyes, because he had no king to govern how he worshipped God.)

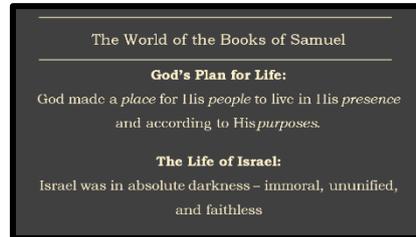
The King. So why did it all rest on the king? Why did the life of Israel rest on the king? What is so significant about this person?

Well in Deuteronomy 17, God specifies His desired King. And the king was to use his own hand to write all of Scripture and to study it all the days of his life. In other words, the king was to have Scripture embedded into His bones. He would embody the law so that He could bring about God's *purposes* on earth.

He would be Israel's champion; her hero. He would be the one who would bring peace to the war without and he would bring peace to the war within. He would be the one who would walk the straight and narrow path and lead His people down paths of righteousness. But in the time of the Judges, there was no king, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes and what was right in their own eyes was evil in the sight of the LORD.

Summary and the Hill Country of Ephraim. And it's in *this* context that we open up Samuel. There is a *people*, but there are few who know God's Law and want to live according to His *purposes*, and as we'll soon see, there are few who come into His *presence*. And though there's a *place*, there's no peace. There's seems to be

constant warring from without and constant warring from within. And *this* is the life of Israel: one of *absolute darkness and restlessness*. Israel are an immoral, ununified and faithless people.



Now as we jump into our text, we see a man named Elkanah whose ancestry is from the hill country of Ephraim. So Why start here? What is the significance of the hill country of Ephraim?

Well on the one hand, many of the events in Judges happened here. The Judge Deborah came from here, Gideon rallied his troops here, and this was the place where civil wars happened around and where there was grievous moral filth recorded in the lives of Israel. And so in the Book of Samuel beginning in the hill country of Ephraim, we're taken to the immediate context of the life of Israel: A situation of absolute darkness and without a leader, and we're left wondering if anything is going to change.

But the hill country of Ephraim is also the place where – in the beginning of the book of Judges – we learn that it was the place that Joshua was buried. And he was buried with his ancestor Joseph, who was buried with his father Jacob, who was buried with his father Isaac, who was buried with his father Abraham, who was promised by God a place and a people. And Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah who was once barren when this promise was made because the LORD had closed her womb.

And in the opening line of Samuel, we hear echoes of that ancient question, “is God faithful to His Word?”, “can He be trusted?”. Put differently, “Will God provide the seed who will embody the Law in order to lead His people to live according to God’s purposes and to do life with God in His presence in a place that has peace?”. And

it's in *this* context, let us now enter into the life of Hannah as we hear how she gave birth to Samuel.

The World of Hannah & the Birth of Samuel			
1	1 - 8	Problem:	The LORD's affliction of Hannah
	9 - 18	Prayer & Promise:	Hannah speaks to the LORD
	19 - 28	Provision:	The LORD remembers Hannah
2	1 - 10	Praise:	Hannah sings to the LORD

ENTERING THE WORLD OF HANNAH AND THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

Now to begin, I want to provide a storyboard to give you a sense of the movements. And in our passage this evening, there are four main movements. There's a problem or an affliction by the LORD which causes Hannah to make a prayer and a promise, which leads the LORD to make provision in giving her a son, that then has Hannah burst in praise to the LORD.

But Hannah's song is no ordinary song. Instead we hear triumphant language. The language of war and salvation and victory over enemies. In other words, the story of Hannah will form the pattern for how God will fulfill His promise. Her life and story is the pattern for how God will work in history to fulfill His ancient promise of a seed.

The World of Hannah & the Birth of Samuel			
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Problem: The LORD's Affliction of Hannah (1:1-8). Now as we move into our text – if I can have you use your imagination – what we see in verses 1-8 are a montage that opens the book. It's an invitation into the world of Hannah to set up the drama from verse 9 onwards that tells the story of Samuel's birth.

And the montage begins in the home. And we first see his marital life. He had two wives: Hannah was who childless and Peninnah who had children. And before I say anything further, let me say emphatically that *reporting does not equal*

endorsement. But second, there is his religious life. That despite the faithlessness and immorality of his community in the hill country of Ephraim, God has kept a remnant for Himself. And year after year, Elkanah would make a pilgrimage from his home to Shiloh where the tabernacle of the LORD had settled.

Then from verse 4, the montage moves to what happened during their pilgrimage and the lens moves from Elkanah to focus on Hannah. And in Hannah we see a woman who seems empty: a woman who feels as though she is barren of purpose because she can't be a mum; and we see a woman who is barren of enjoying God because she has no appetite to partake in eating what was sacrificed to God. She is among the destitute and the downcast because she can't give birth.

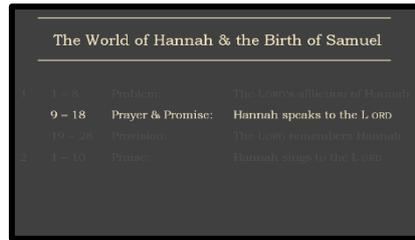
Then there's Peninnah – or the other wife of her husband. And this woman would intensely taunt Hannah and remind her of her affliction.

And then there's Elkanah. A sort of well-meaning husband, but a guy who just doesn't seem to understand his wife and really isn't helpful. For example, we see him give her a double portion, and he seem to think that being favoured by Him will be enough. And so he asks just stupid questions like “why won't you eat?” and “why are you troubled?” and “Am I not better to you than ten sons?”

Now the name Hannah means ‘favoured one’, and the fact of the matter is that yes she was favoured by her husband, but she felt that she wasn't favoured by God. The narrator makes this clear at the end of vv.5 and 6 where the way Elkanah and Peninnah treated Hannah – both in kindness and meanness – were both motivated by their understand that it was the LORD who had closed her womb. And the same was for Hannah. And the same was for Hannah as we'll come to see.

And isn't this so often the case for God's people? The problems are just there. We can't see beyond them or above them or what God might be weaving through them. We just see the problem itself and we forget that God favours us *not* because of who we are, but because of Christ and *His* righteousness for us.

But going back to our narrative, the end of the scene – the end of this montage – leaves us with a woman who is barren of purpose and barren of enjoying God.



Prayer and Promise: Hannah Speaks to the Lord (1:9-18). Now as verse 9 begins, we see a transition out of this montage into one of these occasions. But this time, something's different. Yes, Hannah is still empty and still barren, but her helpless condition has helped her land on a right practical theology. She has come to recognise that it is the LORD who gives life, who sustains life and who takes life, then not only is the LORD the one who is responsible for her condition, but it is the LORD who can change her condition.

And so Hannah goes to the temple to come before the LORD in prayer. And it is during this prayer that she pours out her heart and her tears, and she makes a promise. She says in verse 11,

“Lord of Armies, if you’ll take notice of your servant’s affliction, remember and not forget me, and give your servant a son, I will give him to you all the days of his life, and his hair will never be cut.”

Now the first thing to take note of is the address of her prayer. You see the God she prays to is not a god amongst the gods. And the God she prays to is not a transcendent god who is unreachable. No, she addresses the God who comes near to man – the God who hears His people’s afflictions. The God who wrestled with her ancestor Jacob and the God who met Moses in the burning bush. She has come to the LORD in all capitals which means “I am who I am.” And the LORD isn’t an impotent God who can only lend an ear to hear, but has no power to actually do anything about it. No, this is the LORD of Armies. The God who conquered Egypt, and the God who conquered Jericho and Ai and the tribes in Canaan. Hannah has brought her whole broken self to the one who both cares to help her and is able.

Then the second thing to notice is the content of her prayer. She asks for a son, and she promises to the LORD that if He were to give her this son, she would devote him to the LORD all the days of his life. And the reference to his hair not

being cut is a reference to the Nazarite vow that we read in Numbers 6. It's a life lived by men who were wholly devoted to the LORD.

The State of Israel and its Leaders. So moving on beginning in vv.12. Hannah's praying silently in the LORD's presence. She's having her mouth move while she's praying but there's nothing audible coming out. And the priest Eli that she ran past earlier is watching her pray. He sees her mouth moving and because he cannot hear any words, he thinks that she's drunk.

You see the truth is that Hannah's condition is not too different from the condition of Israel. That in the darkness of her womb, we see the darkness of Israel. Because it was more likely for the priest to believe that a person in the temple was drunk, than for a person in the temple to be worshiping the LORD. Everyone did evil in the eyes of the LORD and everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

So in VV14 Eli says to Hannah, "How long are you going to be drunk? Get rid of your wine!"

But this is the thing. The condition of a people is reflective of its leaders. A company or a nation or a local church will rise or fall depending on the quality of its leaders. And in this prologue, we learn about Eli's flawed self-perception and about his flawed qualification. Now the theological force is not captured in the CSB, but when Hannah runs past Eli, he is described as sitting on a throne. You see for some, being a leader is not to assume the form of a servant and to serve, but as something to be exploited and to be served. To lord their position over others. And in Eli sitting on a throne, we see pride rather than humility. This is his flawed self-perception.

But then in Eli also not being able to discern a prayer from drunken mumbling while in the presence of the LORD – it tells us of his spiritual life and his flawed qualification. This is a man who has no business tending to the people of God. And as we go through Samuel, we cannot miss that this Book is an extended parable on leadership as leader after leader has pride that gets the best of him because he has failed to tend to his spiritual life.

Hannah is able to eat. Now returning to vv.15. Hannah's mortified at this accusation and she explains that she's a woman with a broken heart. And so rather than pouring wine into her body she's been pouring tears out to the LORD – and

she says that she has brought both her anguish and resentment to the LORD. You see, she understood that her situation was brought upon the LORD and she came to Him with her broken self and cried out to the LORD.

Brothers and sisters, as the people of God who have seen Christ come, we ought to bring our whole broken selves to God – not only can He handle it, but He wants to handle it.

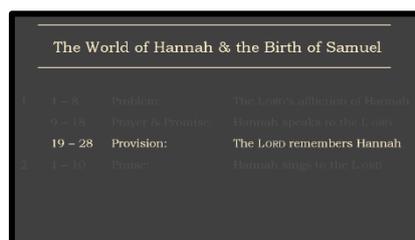
What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

O what peace we often forget,

O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

And so after this exchange, Eli then realises that Hannah is in fact a godly woman. Eli then blesses her, and Hannah goes home, and she is no longer sad, and she is able to eat. Her not being able to eat was a sign that she could not enjoy God, and in eating the food of sacrifice, we see a woman who is able to enjoy her LORD once more. And what is significant brothers and sisters is that Hannah's prayer changed her before it changed her circumstances. She did not have her prayer answered, but in come to the LORD in prayer, it changed her.



Provision: The LORD remembers Hannah (1:19-28). And now we find ourselves seeing God's provision as the LORD remembers Hannah. And the basic movement of the scene is that God remembered Hannah and opened her womb to conceiving a son. Now she knew her promise that she needed to give Samuel to the LORD, but she waited until He was weaned. And then when Samuel was old enough, Hannah takes her only son into the presence of the LORD and she gives Samuel over to

Him. But rather than weeping because she will not be able to see much of her son, Hannah instead prays to God and worships Him.

The LORD Remembers Hannah. Now there are many fascinating theological detours that we could go down. For example, we could go down the road of the remarkable independence of Hannah. Or we could ask whether if Elkanah adopted the vow offering from Hannah. Or we could ask whether it was three young bulls that Hannah brought to sacrifice or if it was a three-year old bull. Or we could focus on the example that Hannah is of faith, her semblance to Abraham, and her fulfilment of her vow.

But the significance is that the LORD remembers Hannah. The LORD is the one who had closed her womb and it is the LORD who had remembered Hannah and who had opened her womb. This word ‘remembrance’ is covenantal and it speaks of God knowing His caring activity in the lives of His people. And here we see a God who remembers and goes after the destitute and downcast.

Questions. Now does this mean does this mean I can pray for a wife? Or does this mean I can pray for children? And what if I say “God... if I give him totally to you, will you answer my prayer? Now these are legitimate questions to ask because of how the story is told, but this is not how we ought to interpret the text. We have to see this as God working through Hannah’s circumstances something greater than Hannah herself; through Hannah God is working typologically and He’s working prophetically. But this should also not detract from reality that God is a God who answers prayer. We cannot fall into a way of living that says ‘because God is sovereign, I have no responsibility to ask for things from Him in prayer.’ He wants us to come to Him; it’s the things that move His heart and enact what unfolds in history.

The World of Hannah & the Birth of Samuel			
1-3	1-10	1-10	1-10
1-3	1-10	1-10	1-10
1-3	1-10	1-10	1-10
2	1-10	Praise:	Hannah sings to the LORD

Praise: Hannah Sings to the LORD (2:1-10). And so we arrive at Hannah's song to the LORD. And what we see in verses 1-2 is that her prayer begins by reflecting on her present state because of what God has done, and she can reflect on what God has done on the basis of who God is:

My heart rejoices in the LORD;

My horn is lifted up by the LORD;

My mouth boasts over my enemies because I rejoice in your salvation.

This is someone who has experienced at a small scale God's saving power. But as the song goes on it takes the tone of the end of Psalm 2. It provides a warning, and the warning that Hannah sings is against pride. She says in verse 3, "Don't boast so proudly or let arrogant words come out of your mouth," and why? "For the LORD is a God of knowledge, and actions are weighed by Him." And this weighing of all human actions by God introduces us to one of the most significant motifs in Samuel.

God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. The consequences of pride are the reversal of fortunes. That those exalt themselves come to experience being humbled, and those who live in a humble state will find themselves as exalted. This is what we read in verses 4-5:

The bows of the warriors are broken, but the feeble are clothed with strength.

Those who full hire themselves out for food, but those who are starving hunger no more.

The woman who is childless gives birth to seven, but the woman with many sons pines away.

You see brothers and sisters, there are two plains of existence to understand the one reality. There is the visible one that we can call the earthly plain – it's what we can see, hear, and touch – it's the plain where we act. But then there's the invisible plain, or the heavenly plain – what we cannot see, hear, or touch – the plain where God acts.

And the reversal of fortunes that we see on earth is because there is an enduring reality in heaven: it's God who opposes the proud and exalts the humble. Because if what Hannah reflects on in verses 4-5 is the earthly reality, then her song takes us to this heavenly reality in verses 6-7:

The LORD brings death and gives life;

He sends some down to Sheol, and He raises others up.

The LORD brings poverty and gives wealth;

He is the One who humbles and He is the One who exalts.

You see, these reversals of fortunes don't just 'happen'. Those who have been humbled is because God has opposed them; and those who have been exalted is because God has raised them up.

And because of this, what we see is that the heart of God is towards the destitute and the downcast. God loves the Hannah's of this world. So if life isn't going how you expected, please know there's a special place in His Kingdom for those who are hurt and helpless. It's what we see in V8:

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the trash heap.

He seats the them with noblemen and He gives them a throne of honour.

And the reason that God does this is because He is the Creator. He can reverse the fortunes of the oppressed because He is the one who made this world and He is the one who sustains this world as it says at the end of verse 8.

The Humble are the Faithful. But why? Why does God oppose the proud and exalt the humble? Why does He have compassion on the humble? You see, What made Hannah have God set His compassion upon her was her understanding that her life was in His hands. Her circumstances didn't have her run from God, but her circumstances helped her to press into God. She could bring her anguish and she could bring her resentment over her situation because she knew He is in control of history and she knew that He is in control of her story.

And this is the sign of the humble in verse 9: they put their faith in the LORD and He ensures that their feet will not stumble. And so believe it or not brothers and sisters, but affliction is a mercy of God. Affliction is a mercy that is given to lead to life. The one's who prevail, the one's who are exalted have trusted not in themselves, but in God. And so the sign of the proud, the sign of the ones whom God opposes, the sign of the one's that – as verse 9 describes – the sign of the one's that don't prevail but perish in the darkness, are those who trust in their own strength. Those who believe they are responsible for their rise.

And as we'll see in Samuel, pride always comes before the fall. As we go through this book, we'll see that this pride has many forms. We'll see it in outright rebellion and disrespect in worship – like the sons of Eli next week. But we'll also see it in subtle disobedience in battle – like Saul deciding to tweak how much He would obey God's command. And then we'll also see it in other forms – like David neglecting His duty as king to read and be filled with God's Word in the mundaneness of every day life. And all their failures come back to this line sung by Hannah, “a person does not prevail by His own strength.”

The Messiah. Yet as much as you and I would like to count ourselves as among the humble, and even though there are aspects within us that demonstrate genuine humility, the reality is that we like every else are proud. And the threat of what God might do extends to all of us. We are all left needing a champion; we're all left need a hero for humanity.

Like I noted earlier brothers and sisters, there are dual plains of existence describing the one reality. One the one hand, man is responsible for his actions, and other the other, God is sovereign over history. And while the fortunes of the humble and proud will reverse, it's God who opposes the proud and who exalts the humble. And it's in this final line that Hannah prophetically introduces us to the place where these two plains of heaven and earth will converge. And it's on God's anointed King.

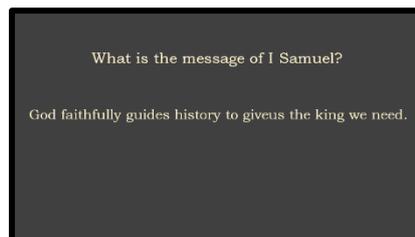
God will give power to His King;

He will lift up the horn of the anointed.

God is the one who rules the earth and He is looking for a King who will embody His word. This is the man whom God will raise his horn, which means strength. And the one whom is of the most humble state God will exalt to the highest place. And as we go through the Book of Samuel and we look at David, there are going to be semblances of this king, but inevitably we will learn that David is not the seed that God has promised. The question of 'will God provide the seed?' remains unanswered in the Book of Samuel, but it shows us that He is working out a plan that is finally fulfilled in Jesus. It is this man Jesus who embodied the word of God and is humanity's champion. In His humility he did not exploit His position but instead assumed the form of a servant, and He humbled Himself to death, even death on a cross, and for this reason God highly exalted Him, giving Him the name above every name – that at the name of Jesus every knee would bow and every tongue would confess that Jesus Christ is LORD.

MESSAGE

And so this evening we asked the question, 'What is the message of the Book of Samuel?' How does this prologue set us up for the rest of this book? Well the answer that we'll see weaved throughout this book is the 'God faithfully guides history to give us the king we need'.



And by way of closing, what can you take away from this? For the poor, for the needy, for those of a low estate, for the barren, for the widowed, for the fatherless, please know that God's heart is set towards you. And for the proud, for those who believe they have made themselves: be warned. As we go through the Book of Samuel, my prayer brothers and sisters is that the rise and fall of religious orders and political leaders would have us be warned and take heed of the signs of a proud heart. But of course, because pride has taken a hold of all of us in some way, we must rest in the knowledge that Christ is the One who humbled Himself

the most and has been exalted to the highest throne. He is our champion and He is the One who calls us and leads us down the paths of righteousness. And so in sending Christ to die for us, we can rest in knowing that God is faithful to His Word.

Let's pray.